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Most of us use dusting powders and sprays to get rid of household insects or to control the insects that threaten our house plants, our flower beds outside, and our kitchen gardens.

It's a part of the job of the Food and Drug Administration to see that all such preparations will do what is claimed for them. Some of the preparations put on the market are weak, some are entirely worthless, and some contain ingredients that are injurious to the plants on which they are to be used.

On the whole, insecticides are conforming better to standards of quality, says the Food and Drug Administration. Last year, out of 750 household insecticides examined by this agency of the Government, only 35 required prosecution or seizure. Entomologists at the Administration made some interesting tests on insecticides, and learned some new points on insect likes and dislikes. Many species of ants like sugars, but they like the sweetest ones best. They do not care for milk sugar at all because it is not very sweet. So it's useless for a manufacturer to mix up an ant poison containing only milk sugar as a sweetener. Some of the common varieties of ants definitely prefer greases and pass over sweetened poisons unless some sort of fat is added to them.

Fly sprays, moth preventives, and moth-proofing solutions are better than they used to be. Some moth preparations are made so as to leave a substance in the fiber of the article to protect it from moth damage for a long period of time. About 250 moth preparations were tested, and only 5 were seized.



Some of the disinfectants, germicides and bactericides that contain chlorine were found not to have the strength claimed. In some cases this was because chlorine preparations deteriorate if held any length of time. On the whole all these preparations were better than they used to be.

One experience the Food and Drug men meet constantly is food poisoning due to the carelessness in storing insecticides. There is no reason why roach powders or arsenical materials should be placed on a shelf next to flour, corn-starch, baking powder, salt, or sugar.

Each home should have a hard and fast rule to keep all insecticides far from food supplies, and see that the packages are labeled plainly for what they are, with POISON in large letters if the substance is a poison. And never to put an insecticide in a bag, tin, jar, or other receptacle that ordinarily is used for something else.

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